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MEMORANDUM FOR THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NAVY (R&D)
THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE (R&D)
THE DIRECTOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT, DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

SUBJECT: Policy, Missile and Space Vehicle Flight Safety

REFERENCE: DDR&E Memo of 8 Jun 1960, Subject: "Policy, Ranges and Space Ground Support"

The missile and space vehicle flight safety policy discussed herein is promulgated as a preliminary policy letter under the provisions outlined in the referenced memorandum. The purpose of this memorandum is to define the responsibilities of the National Range Commanders over the in-flight safety function at the Atlantic, Pacific, and White Sands Missile Ranges. It is recognized that this memorandum may be in conflict with certain Service-to-Service Agreements now in force. Separate actions are underway to determine appropriate revisions or cancellation of such agreements. Any comments or questions concerning this policy should be brought to the attention of the Office of DDR&E as soon as practicable.

National Range Commanders are responsible for assuring maximum flight safety consistent with operational requirements for all missiles and space vehicles launched from facilities under their respective commands. They are also responsible for in-flight safety of missiles and space vehicles launched into the National Ranges from areas adjacent to such facilities, or from adjacent DOD activities such as Vandenberg Air Force Base. This responsibility includes determination of the policies governing safety aspects of missile and space vehicle flights, and establishment of allowable limits of flight trajectories, acceptable locations for booster fall-out and terminal impact areas.

The Range Commander is responsible for ensuring provision of instrumentation for maintaining information on in-flight position of missiles to burn-out and space vehicles to final orbital position or escape velocity, sufficient to indicate malfunction or give assurance that the flight is progressing within predetermined safety limitations. The Range Commander will further be responsible for actuation of destruct devices or thrust termination, if necessary, to confine the flight within these limiting conditions.

The Range Commander is responsible for coordination of any necessary safety procedures with private or governmental agencies. He will promulgate any notices required within the United States and/or to foreign governments (through appropriate channels) in connection with anticipated hazards from launchings of missiles or space vehicles included within his respective area of in-flight safety responsibilities.

The release of public information regarding the safety aspects of missile and space vehicle operations requires special attention. The possible hazards and margins of safety are matters of public concern. It is essential, therefore, that such information be released to the public by the single source that is most knowledgeable. In order to ensure a consistent DOD position, the Range Commander will be solely responsible for any public statements concerning in-flight safety practices, policies, procedures and margins of safety. The public affairs plan for any launch will be coordinated with the Range Commander for proposed statements involving in-flight safety. In the event of in-flight incidents involving safety, the Range Commander will be solely responsible for reporting any amplifying information beyond that contained in the pre-planned statements in the public affairs plan for that launch.

Range users are responsible for providing to the range the performance characteristics of their vehicles and contemplated flight trajectories in the detail and format, and on the time schedule required by the range.

Safety plans for R&D or training launches conducted within National Range areas of responsibility but from activities not falling within the definition of paragraph 2, above (such as Roosevelt Roads), will be coordinated with the National Range Commander to ensure consistency of safety policy and practices as they may affect relationships and agreements of the National Range with other federal agencies and foreign governments.

/s/ D. N. Yates

For Herbert F. York